

CLASSIFICATIONS OF INFORMATION  
AND MATERIAL

yet been able to create the one system on this material. I do, however, at the behest of the originator, so often as is practicable under conditions

possibility for the Archivist is tailored to stration plans for an immediate and systematic classification of World War II documents. On I asked the Congress for a supplemental \$636,000 to that would begin this direction of the National Archives and of the General Services Administration. s not yet responded to this request, but action this year

#### *Against Over-Classification.*

In the current system, in which officials find it in their best interest to classify all materials of a questionable nature, I am hopeful that the new Executive order will encourage them to exercise their authority with restraint. The order explicitly states that information shall not be classified "in order to conceal inefficiency or administrative error . . . or to prevent for any other reason the release of information which does not require protection in the interest of national security." More than that, each agency is to provide a means of identifying the classifying authority for each document and each official is to be held personally responsible for the propriety of the classifications attributed to him. Repeated abuse of the process through excessive classification shall be grounds for administrative action.

#### *6. Monitoring the New System.*

Of critical importance to the effectiveness of my Executive order will be the new administrative machinery designed to ensure that its provisions are not allowed to become mere meaningless exhortations. The National Security Council will monitor compliance with the Executive order. In addition, the order creates a small Inter-agency Classification Review Committee with extensive powers to oversee agency implementation of the new system, and to take action on complaints both from within and from outside the Government on the administration of the order.

#### **ACCELERATING PUBLICATION OF FOREIGN RELATIONS SERIES**

My second action today was to direct an acceleration in the publication by the Department of State of the official documentary series, "Foreign Relations of the United States." Since 1861, that series has been an invaluable resource for historians and others interested in our past. For many years each publication contained documents written only a few years before, but soon after the Second World War, when Government files were being with war papers, a 20-year lag developed between origination and publication. Now, however, the lag has stretched to 26 years and the Department of State is presently publishing materials relating to events of 1946.

The delay is too long and has created of time to institute immediately a program this same lag to 20 years and to implement within 18 months. I have also instructed the Defense, the Director of Central Intelligence, Assistant for National Security Affairs to assist with this effort.

**NOTE:** For related items see the following four items:

## **Classification and Declassification National Security Information and Material**

### **Executive Order 11652. March 8, 1972**

The interests of the United States and its citizens are best served by making information regarding the affairs of Government readily available to the public. This concept of an informed citizenry is reflected in the Freedom of Information Act and in the current public information policies of the executive branch.

Within the Federal Government there is some official information and material which, because it bears directly on the effectiveness of our national defense and the conduct of our foreign relations, must be subject to some constraints for the security of our Nation and the safety of our people and our allies. To protect against action hostile to the United States, of both an overt and covert nature, it is essential that such official information and material be given only limited dissemination.

This official information or material, referred to as classified information or material in this order, is expressly exempted from public disclosure by Section 552 (b)(1) of Title 5, United States Code. Wrongful disclosure of such information or material is recognized in the Federal Criminal Code as providing a basis for prosecution.

To ensure that such information and material is protected, but only to the extent and for such period as is necessary, this order identifies the information to be protected, prescribes classification, downgrading, declassification and safeguarding procedures to be followed, and establishes a monitoring system to ensure its effectiveness.

Now, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and statutes of the United States, it is hereby ordered

**SECTION 1. Security Classification Categories.** Classification of information or material which requires protection unauthorized disclosure in the interest of the national defense or foreign relations of the United States or after collectively termed "national security" shall be classified in one of three categories, namely "Top Secret," "Secret," or "Confidential," depending upon the

significance to national security. No other categories shall be used to identify official information or material requiring protection in the interest of national security, except as otherwise expressly provided by statute. These classification categories are defined as follows:

(A) "*Top Secret.*" "*Top Secret*" refers to that national security information or material which requires the highest degree of protection. The test for assigning "*Top Secret*" classification shall be whether its unauthorized disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause exceptionally grave damage to the national security. Examples of "exceptionally grave damage" include armed hostilities against the United States or its allies; disruption of foreign relations vitally affecting the national security; the compromise of vital national defense plans or complex cryptologic and communications intelligence systems; the revelation of sensitive intelligence operations; and the disclosure of scientific or technological developments vital to national security. This classification shall be used with the utmost restraint.

(B) "*Secret.*" "*Secret*" refers to that national security information or material which requires a substantial degree of protection. The test for assigning "*Secret*" classification shall be whether its unauthorized disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause serious damage to the national security. Examples of "serious damage" include disruption of foreign relations significantly affecting the national security; significant impairment of a program or policy directly related to the national security; revelation of significant military plans or intelligence operations; and compromise of significant scientific or technological developments relating to national security. The classification "*Secret*" shall be sparingly used.

(C) "*Confidential.*" "*Confidential*" refers to that national security information or material which requires protection. The test for assigning "*Confidential*" classification shall be whether its unauthorized disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause damage to the national security.

**SEC. 2. Authority to Classify.** The authority to originally classify information or material under this order shall be restricted solely to those offices within the executive branch which are concerned with matters of national security, and shall be limited to the minimum number absolutely required for efficient administration. Except as the context may otherwise indicate, the term "*Department*" as used in this order shall include agency or other governmental unit.

(A) The authority to originally classify information or material under this order as "*Top Secret*" shall be exercised only by such officials as the President may designate in writing and by:

(1) The heads of the Departments listed below;

(2) Such of their senior principal deputies and assistants as the heads of such Departments may designate in writing; and

(3) Such heads and senior principal deputies and assistants of major elements of such Departments, as the heads of such Departments may designate in writing

Such offices in the Executive Office of the President as the President may designate in writing

Central Intelligence Agency

Atomic Energy Commission

Department of State

Department of the Treasury

Department of Defense

Department of the Army

Department of the Navy

Department of the Air Force

United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency

Department of Justice

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Agency for International Development

(B) The authority to originally classify information or material under this order as "*Secret*" shall be exercised only by:

(1) Officials who have "*Top Secret*" classification authority;

(2) Such subordinates as officials with "*Top Secret*" classification authority under (A) (1) and (2) above may designate in writing; and

(3) The heads of the following named Departments and such senior principal deputies or assistants as they may designate in writing.

Department of Transportation

Federal Communications Commission

Export-Import Bank of the United States

Department of Commerce

United States Civil Service Commission

United States Information Agency

General Services Administration

Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

Civil Aeronautics Board

Federal Maritime Commission

Federal Power Commission

National Science Foundation

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

(C) The authority to originally classify information or material under this order as "*Confidential*" may be exercised by officials who have "*Top Secret*" or "*Secret*" classification authority and such officials as they may designate in writing.

(D) Any Department not referred to herein and any Department or unit established hereafter shall not have authority to originally classify information or material under this order, unless specifically authorized hereafter by an Executive order.

**SEC. 3. Authority to Downgrade and Declassify.** The authority to downgrade and declassify national security information or material shall be exercised as follows:

(A) Information or material may be downgraded or declassified by the official authorizing the original clas-

sincation, by a successor in capacity or by a supervisory official of either.

(B) Downgrading and declassification authority may also be exercised by an official specifically authorized under regulations issued by the head of the Department listed in Sections 2(A) or (B) herof.

(C) In the case of classified information or material officially transferred by or pursuant to statute or Executive order in conjunction with a transfer of function and not merely for storage purposes, the receiving Department shall be deemed to be the originating Department for all purposes under this order including downgrading and declassification.

(D) In the case of classified information or material not officially transferred within (C) above, but originated in a Department which has since ceased to exist, each Department in possession shall be deemed to be the originating Department for all purposes under this order. Such information or material may be downgraded and declassified by the Department in possession after consulting with any other Departments having an interest in the subject matter.

(E) Classified information or material transferred to the General Services Administration for accession into the Archives of the United States shall be downgraded and declassified by the Archivist of the United States in accordance with this order, directives of the President issued through the National Security Council and pertinent regulations of the Departments.

(F) Classified information or material with special markings, as described in Section 8, shall be downgraded and declassified as required by law and governing regulations.

**SEC. 4. Classification.** Each person possessing classifying authority shall be held accountable for the propriety of the classifications attributed to him. Both unnecessary classification and over-classification shall be avoided. Classification shall be solely on the basis of national security considerations. In no case shall information be classified in order to conceal inefficiency or administrative error, to prevent embarrassment to a person or Department, to restrain competition or independent initiative, or to prevent for any other reason the release of information which does not require protection in the interest of national security. The following rules shall apply to classification of information under this order:

(A) *Documents in General.* Each classified document shall show on its face its classification and whether it is subject to or exempt from the General Declassification Schedule. It shall also show the office of origin, the date of preparation and classification and, to the extent practicable, be so marked as to indicate which portions are classified, at what level, and which portions are not classified in order to facilitate excerpting and other use. Material containing references to classified materials, which references do not reveal classified information, shall not be classified.

(B) *Identification of Classifying Authority.* Unless the Department involved shall have provided some other method of identifying the individual at the highest level that authorized classification in each case, material classified under this order shall indicate on its face the identity of the highest authority authorizing the classification. Where the individual who signs or otherwise authenticates a document or item has also authorized the classification, no further annotation as to his identity is required.

(C) *Information or Material Furnished by a Foreign Government or International Organization.* Classified information or material furnished to the United States by a foreign government or international organization shall either retain its original classification or be assigned a United States classification. In either case, the classification shall assure a degree of protection equivalent to that required by the government or international organization which furnished the information or material.

(D) *Classification Responsibilities.* A holder of classified information or material shall observe and respect the classification assigned by the originator. If a holder believes that there is unnecessary classification, that the assigned classification is improper, or that the document is subject to declassification under this order, he shall so inform the originator who shall thereupon re-examine the classification.

**SEC. 5. Declassification and Downgrading.** Classified information and material, unless declassified earlier by the original classifying authority, shall be declassified and downgraded in accordance with the following rules:

(A) *General Declassification Schedule.*

(1) "*Top Secret.*" Information or material originally classified "Top Secret" shall become automatically downgraded to "Secret" at the end of the second full calendar year following the year in which it was originated, downgraded to "Confidential" at the end of the fourth full calendar year following the year in which it was originated, and declassified at the end of the tenth full calendar year following the year in which it was originated.

(2) "*Secret.*" Information and material originally classified "Secret" shall become automatically downgraded to "Confidential" at the end of the second full calendar year following the year in which it was originated, and declassified at the end of the eighth full calendar year following the year in which it was originated.

(3) "*Confidential.*" Information and material originally classified "Confidential" shall become automatically declassified at the end of the sixth full calendar year following the year in which it was originated.

(B) *Exemptions from General Declassification Schedule.* Certain classified information or material may warrant some degree of protection for a period exceeding that provided in the General Declassification Schedule. An official authorized to originally classify information or material "Top Secret" may exempt from the General Declassification Schedule any level of classified information or material originated by him or under his supervi-

## WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, MARCH 13, 1972

it falls within one of the categories described below. In each case such official shall specify in writing on the material the exemption category being claimed and, unless impossible, a date or event for automatic declassification. The use of the exemption authority shall be kept to the absolute minimum consistent with national security requirements and shall be restricted to the following categories:

(1) Classified information or material furnished by foreign governments or international organizations and held by the United States on the understanding that it be kept in confidence.

(2) Classified information or material specifically covered by statute, or pertaining to cryptography, or disclosing intelligence sources or methods.

(3) Classified information or material disclosing a system, plan, installation, project or specific foreign relations matter the continuing protection of which is essential to the national security.

(4) Classified information or material the disclosure of which would place a person in immediate jeopardy.

(C) *Mandatory Review of Exempted Material.* All classified information and material originated after the effective date of this order which is exempted under (B) above from the General Declassification Schedule shall be subject to a classification review by the originating Department at any time after the expiration of ten years from the date of origin provided:

(1) A Department or member of the public requests a review;

(2) The request describes the record with sufficient particularity to enable the Department to identify it; and

(3) The record can be obtained with only a reasonable amount of effort.

Information or material which no longer qualifies for exemption under (B) above shall be declassified. Information or material continuing to qualify under (B) shall be so marked and, unless impossible, a date for automatic declassification shall be set.

(D) *Applicability of the General Declassification Schedule to Previously Classified Material.* Information or material classified before the effective date of this order and which is assigned to Group 4 under Executive Order No. 10501, as amended by Executive Order No. 10964, shall be subject to the General Declassification Schedule. All other information or material classified before the effective date of this order, whether or not assigned to Groups 1, 2, or 3 of Executive Order No. 10501, as amended, shall be excluded from the General Declassification Schedule. However, at any time after the expiration of ten years from the date of origin it shall be subject to a mandatory classification review and disposition under the same conditions and criteria that apply to classified information and material created after the effective date of this order as set forth in (B) and (C) above.

(E) *Declassification of Classified Information or Material After Thirty Years.* All classified information or ma-

terial which is thirty years old or more, whether originating before or after the effective date of this order, shall be declassified under the following conditions:

(1) All information and material classified after the effective date of this order shall, whether or not declassification has been requested, become automatically declassified at the end of thirty full calendar years after the date of its original classification except for such specifically identified information or material which the head of the originating Department personally determines in writing at that time to require continued protection because such continued protection is essential to the national security or disclosure would place a person in immediate jeopardy. In such case, the head of the Department shall also specify the period of continued classification.

(2) All information and material classified before the effective date of this order and more than thirty years old shall be systematically reviewed for declassification by the Archivist of the United States by the end of the thirtieth full calendar year following the year in which it was originated. In his review, the Archivist will separate and keep protected only such information or material as is specifically identified by the head of the Department in accordance with (E) (1) above. In such case, the head of the Department shall also specify the period of continued classification.

(F) *Departments Which Do Not Have Authority For Original Classification.* The provisions of this section relating to the declassification of national security information or material shall apply to Departments which, under the terms of this order, do not have current authority to originally classify information or material, but which formerly had such authority under previous Executive orders.

SEC. 6. *Policy Directives on Access, Marking, Safekeeping, Accountability, Transmission, Disposition and Destruction of Classified Information and Material.* The President acting through the National Security Council shall issue directives which shall be binding on all Departments to protect classified information from loss or compromise. Such directives shall conform to the following policies:

(A) No person shall be given access to classified information or material unless such person has been determined to be trustworthy and unless access to such information is necessary for the performance of his duties.

(B) All classified information and material shall be appropriately and conspicuously marked to put all persons on clear notice of its classified contents.

(C) Classified information and material shall be used, possessed, and stored only under conditions which will prevent access by unauthorized persons or dissemination to unauthorized persons.

(D) All classified information and material disseminated outside the executive branch under Executive Order No. 10865 or otherwise shall be properly protected.

(E) Appropriate accountability records for classified information shall be established and maintained and such

information and material shall be protected adequately during all transmissions.

(F) Classified information and material no longer needed in current working files or for reference or record purposes shall be destroyed or disposed of in accordance with the records disposal provisions contained in Chapter 33 of Title 44 of the United States Code and other applicable statutes.

(G) Classified information or material shall be reviewed on a systematic basis for the purpose of accomplishing downgrading, declassification, transfer, retirement and destruction at the earliest practicable date.

*SEC. 7. Implementation and Review Responsibilities.*

(A) The National Security Council shall monitor the implementation of this order. To assist the National Security Council, an Interagency Classification Review Committee shall be established, composed of representatives of the Departments of State, Defense and Justice, the Atomic Energy Commission, the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Council Staff and a Chairman designated by the President. Representatives of other Departments in the executive branch may be invited to meet with the Committee on matters of particular interest to those Departments. This Committee shall meet regularly and on a continuing basis shall review and take action to ensure compliance with this order, and in particular:

(1) The Committee shall oversee Department actions to ensure compliance with the provisions of this order and implementing directives issued by the President through the National Security Council.

(2) The Committee shall, subject to procedures to be established by it, receive, consider and take action on suggestions and complaints from persons within or without the government with respect to the administration of this order, and in consultation with the affected Department or Departments assure that appropriate action is taken on such suggestions and complaints.

(3) Upon request of the Committee Chairman, any Department shall furnish to the Committee any particular information or material needed by the Committee in carrying out its functions.

(B) To promote the basic purposes of this order, the head of each Department originating or handling classified information or material shall:

(1) Prior to the effective date of this order submit to the Interagency Classification Review Committee for approval a copy of the regulations it proposes to adopt pursuant to this order.

(2) Designate a senior member of his staff who shall ensure effective compliance with and implementation of this order and shall also chair a Departmental committee which shall have authority to act on all suggestions and complaints with respect to the Department's administration of this order.

(3) Undertake an initial program to familiarize the employees of his Department with the provisions of this order. He shall also establish and maintain active training and orientation programs for employees concerned with

classified information or material. Such programs shall include, as a minimum, the briefing of new employers and periodic reorientation during employment to impress upon each individual his responsibility for exercising vigilance and care in complying with the provisions of this order. Additionally, upon termination of employment or contemplated temporary separation for a sixty-day period or more, employees shall be debriefed and each reminded of the provisions of the Criminal Code and other applicable provisions of law relating to penalties for unauthorized disclosure.

(C) The Attorney General, upon request of the head of a Department, his duly designated representative, or the Chairman of the above described Committee, shall personally or through authorized representatives of the Department of Justice render an interpretation of this order with respect to any question arising in the course of its administration.

*SEC. 8. Material Covered by the Atomic Energy Act.* Nothing in this order shall supersede any requirements made by or under the Atomic Energy Act of August 30, 1954, as amended. "Restricted Data," and material designated as "Formerly Restricted Data," shall be handled, protected, classified, downgraded and declassified in conformity with the provisions of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, and the regulations of the Atomic Energy Commission.

*SEC. 9. Special Departmental Arrangements.* The originating Department or other appropriate authority may impose, in conformity with the provisions of this order, special requirements with respect to access, distribution and protection of classified information and material, including those which presently relate to communications intelligence, intelligence sources and methods and cryptography.

*SEC. 10. Exceptional Cases.* In an exceptional case when a person or Department not authorized to classify information originates information which is believed to require classification, such person or Department shall protect that information in the manner prescribed by this order. Such persons or Department shall transmit the information forthwith, under appropriate safeguards, to the Department having primary interest in the subject matter with a request that a determination be made as to classification.

*SEC. 11. Declassification of Presidential Papers.* The Archivist of the United States shall have authority to review and declassify information and material which has been classified by a President, his White House Staff or special committee or commission appointed by him and which the Archivist has in his custody at any archival depository, including a Presidential Library. Such declassification shall only be undertaken in accord with: (i) the terms of the donor's deed of gift, (ii) consultations with the Departments having a primary subject-matter interest, and (iii) the provisions of Section 5.

*SEC. 12. Historical Research and Access by Former Government Officials.* The requirement in Section 6(A)

assifica information or material be granted  
sary for the performance of one's duties  
to persons outside the executive branch  
ed in historical research projects or who  
occupied policy-making positions to which  
appointed by the President; *Provided*, how-  
ever, in each case the head of the originating Depart-  
ment shall

determine that access is clearly consistent with the  
interests of national security; and

(v) take appropriate steps to assure that classified  
information or material is not published or otherwise  
compromised.

Access granted a person by reason of his having previously  
occupied a policy-making position shall be limited to those  
papers which the former official originated, reviewed,  
signed or received while in public office.

SEC. 13. *Administrative and Judicial Action.*

(A) Any officer or employee of the United States who  
unnecessarily classifies or over-classifies information or  
material shall be notified that his actions are in violation  
of the terms of this order or of a directive of the President  
issued through the National Security Council. Repeated  
abuse of the classification process shall be grounds for an  
administrative reprimand. In any case where the Depart-  
mental committee or the Interagency Classification Re-  
view Committee finds that unnecessary classification or  
over-classification has occurred, it shall make a report to  
the head of the Department concerned in order that  
corrective steps may be taken.

(B) The head of each Department is directed to take  
prompt and stringent administrative action against any  
officer or employee of the United States, at any level of  
employment, determined to have been responsible for  
any release or disclosure of national security information  
or material in a manner not authorized by or under this  
order or a directive of the President issued through the  
National Security Council. Where a violation of criminal  
statutes may be involved, Departments will refer any  
such case promptly to the Department of Justice.

SEC. 14. *Revocation of Executive Order No. 10501.*  
Executive Order No. 10501 of November 5, 1953, as  
amended by Executive Orders No. 10816 of May 8, 1959,  
No. 10901 of January 11, 1961, No. 10964 of Septem-  
ber 20, 1961, No. 10985 of January 15, 1962, No. 11097  
of March 6, 1963 and by Section 1(a) of No. 11382 of  
November 28, 1967, is superseded as of the effective  
date of this order.

SEC. 15. *Effective Date.* This order shall become effec-  
tive on June 1, 1972.

RICHARD NIXON

The White House  
March 8, 1972

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:01 a.m.,  
March 9, 1972]

NOTE: To the President's statement upon issuing the Executive  
order preceding item. For other related items, see the  
following items.

## Classification and Declassification of National Security Information and Material

*The President's Order Designating Certain Offices in  
the Executive Office of the President as Possessing  
Authority To Classify Material "Top Secret."*  
March 8, 1972

Pursuant to Section 2(A) of the Executive Order of  
March 8, 1972, entitled Classification and Declassifica-  
tion of National Security Information and Material, I  
hereby designate the following offices in the Executive  
Office of the President as possessing authority to originally  
classify information or material "Top Secret" as set forth  
in said Order:

The White House Office  
National Security Council  
Office of Management and Budget  
Domestic Council  
Office of Science and Technology  
Office of Emergency Preparedness  
President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board  
Council on International Economic Policy  
Council of Economic Advisers  
National Aeronautics and Space Council  
Office of Telecommunications Policy

RICHARD NIXON

The White House  
March 8, 1972

NOTE: For a statement by the President and an Executive order  
establishing the new classification system, see the two preceding  
items.

## Acceleration of Publication of "Foreign Relations" Series

*The President's Memorandum for the Secretary  
of State. March 8, 1972*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
SUBJECT: Acceleration of Publication of "Foreign Rela-  
tions" Series

The official documentary series "Foreign Relations of  
the United States," published by the Department of State,  
has for many years provided the American public with  
an indispensable perspective on our Nation's history. The  
materials now being published, however, relate to the